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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 003412

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CY](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S CYPRUS POLICY: WHAT NOW?

REF: A. NICOSIA 901

[B](#). ANKARA 2155

[C](#). ANKARA 2431

(U) Classified by Ambassador W.R. Pearson. Reason:1.5(b)(d)

[1](#). (C) Summary: Assessments of how Turkey should move on Cyprus vary in both the GOT and Turkish State. Some (e.g., FonMin Gul) are working to overcome what they recognize as pressure on Turkey's interests following the failure of the UN-sponsored Cyprus talks and the EU's decision to accept a divided Cyprus as a member. However, while promoting the recent series of Turkish and Turkish Cypriot confidence-building initiatives, others in the MFA bureaucracy and elsewhere remain reluctant to take bold steps toward a comprehensive solution, even though they recognize that such moves would help improve Turkish-EU and U.S.-Turkish relations. These holdouts continue to reject the UNSYG plan (Annan III) as the basis for further negotiations. End Summary.

Pyrrhic Victory for the Establishment?

[2](#). (C) Turkey (both GOT and elements of the State) put itself in a bind by insisting it could not handle Iraq and Cyprus simultaneously, and then failing to take clear and beneficial decisions on both.

[3](#). (C) On Cyprus policy, The ability of the pro-status-quo camp in Ankara to prevent Erdogan from embracing Annan III appeared at first to be a victory for an Establishment that fears the AK Party and P.M. Erdogan as existential threats to its dominance.

-- TGS J5 Lt. Gen Turgut told visiting DAS Pascoe May 22 that the key to a successful resolution of the Cyprus problem was ensuring that the Turkish and Cypriot communities live on the island as equal partners. Turgut said that if Turkey had accepted the Annan III plan, in ten years time, there would not be any Turkish residing on the island. All of the "rich" would buy all of the land the "poor" would be left with nothing, forced to leave. Turgut predicated that in the end, "you would have another Palestine." He added that Turkish Cypriots who demonstrated against Denktas and the status quo are "communists."

-- Erdogan initially strongly criticized Denktas and the GOT's business-as-usual approach on Cyprus, but ultimately succumbed to Establishment pressure and backed off. Erdogan's May 9 visit to Cyprus reflected this retreat as he called simultaneously for both Annan III and a "sovereign TRNC" in an attempt to placate both hard liners and those looking for a new opening. Now, however, the Erdogan government, with FonMin Gul taking the lead, is once again looking for room to maneuver.

-- At the same time, as the draftsman of Turkey's Cyprus diplomacy, the MFA, though charged with damage control and responding to a barrage of international criticism, is ultimately hewing to its Establishment line, one that FonMin Gul criticized as a "non-solution solution" in the beginning of his short tenure as P.M. MFA officials are trying to shift blame for the failure of the talks from Turkey and Denktas, and toward the UN and EU for seeking too high a price from Ankara. They argue that progress on Cyprus requires keeping the door open to an Annan Plan -- even as they reject the plan itself as a basis for negotiations (ref C).

[4](#). (C) Trying a different tack on May 22, MFA U/S Ziyal asserted to Ambassador and DAS Pascoe that the principal reason Turkey ultimately rejected the Annan Plan was its "unacceptable" requirement that "100 thousand Turkish

Cypriots" -- 50% of the population, according to Ziyal -- would eventually have to leave home. Ambassador Pearson replied that the figure cited by Ziyal does not coincide with our understanding, and that Turkish and U.S. diplomats in Ankara should be willing to conduct a review of the numbers -- and what was or was not called for under the plan. Cyprus DG Apakan later reiterated Ziyal's point, adding that it is also "too much" to expect that Turkey and the "TRNC" would simultaneously accept the return of "85-90 thousand" Greek Cypriots to the north.

GOT Taking Steps -- or Walking in Place?

15. (C) According to Apakan, Turkey is evaluating its Cyprus policy in the wake of the failed talks on three "fronts": the UN, the EU, and the "realities on the ground" on the island. The GOT is trying to change the environment on Cyprus through measures that "do not substitute, but will facilitate" and reinvigorate efforts to find a comprehensive settlement, he said. Denktas, he stated, has taken the initiative in recent weeks by opening the "TRNC" border to Greek Cypriot tourists, allowing them to visit their former homes for the first time since 1974 and generating good will on the island. DAS Pascoe responded that the evident good will on both sides gives the lie to the arguments that Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots could never get along -- and demonstrates instead the desire on both sides to cut a deal. Apakan demurred. Apakan also noted the GOT's decision, announced by Erdogan May 16, to allow Greek Cypriots to travel to Turkey.

16. (C) The next step, Apakan argued, should be taken by the other side -- to end the de facto embargo of the north. "There is neither an EU nor UN decision imposing a formal embargo on the 'TRNC,'" he said. An axiom of the methodology of conflict resolution holds that settlements are reached between equal sides, Apakan asserted. To redress the imbalance and as a prerequisite for a solution on Cyprus, the "TRNC" should be allowed direct access to the wider world. "End the embargo and the Cyprus problem will be settled," he opined.

Implications

17. (C) At a political level the GOT recognizes it is in a bind over Cyprus. At the same time, the MFA's impulse is directed primarily toward damage control, not by any sense that Turkish policies are a dead end. Opening the "TRNC" border and allowing Greek Cypriots to travel to Turkey, though laudable, do not signal a sea-change in Turkey's approach to Cyprus. In fact, the rigidity of the TGS and MFA approach to Cyprus policy is a manifestation of a wider, systemic problem of State Establishment (vice civilian government) dominance of government policymaking, and of the alignment of political players in Turkey's rough-and-tumble domestic political theater. Those without strong emotional, political, or pecuniary ties to Denktas and the current GOT-"TRNC" machinery, e.g., Erdogan and Gul, have demonstrated that they want to make a breakthrough. At the same time, those who rigidly adhere to traditional Turkish State policy -- and those who recognize the tactical problems associated with appearing opposed to change but continue nevertheless to hew to the Establishment line -- have the upper hand, discouraging the kind of comprehensive risk-taking that might pave the way for a solution on Cyprus. Consequently, Turkish flexibility on Cyprus may only be possible as an outcome of AK's ongoing effort to crack the Establishment's policymaking dominance.

PEARSON